

Thursday, May 19, 2011

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(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – In response to President Barack Obama's speech on U.S. policy toward the Middle East and North Africa, U.S. Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3) issued the following statement:

**"Today, the President laid out his vision for building a constructive relationship with the people of the Middle East and North Africa, and why that relationship is important to the economic and security interests of the American people.**

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**"With families and businesses in St. Louis dealing with the double whammy of a tenuous economic recovery and gas prices crossing the four dollar mark, we must make global stability the focus of our foreign policy. Beyond the obvious impact on the American**

**servicemen and women who continue to serve bravely in the Middle East, stability in this region is critical to creating export opportunities for Missouri businesses, growing jobs here at home, and strengthening our national security.**

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**“As the President made clear – this is not a short-term strategy. For this reason, it is important that we strengthen our strategic engagement in the region through diplomacy, development, and basic, people-to-people contact.**

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**“We are standing at a critical moment in world history. The Arab Spring has opened a doorway to pave a new path toward global peace and stability. It is an opportunity which I strongly believe we must seize.”**

*Russ Carnahan is a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.□ He is the Ranking Member on the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, and a voting member of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights.*

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